
Tennessee Learning Centered Leadership Policy

The Background:

Tennessee's Learning Centered Leadership Policy, initially approved in November of 2008, is recognized by many school leadership experts as among the finest school leadership standards in the nation. It has provided the guidance for the redesign of school leadership preparation programs offered by colleges and universities across Tennessee.

Section I.e. of the Policy describes a program approval process conducted by the State Department of Education. The proposed revision to the Policy provides greater clarity and specificity for program approval procedures. The revision identifies the primary areas of focus for the evaluation process and the range of program approval recommendations the Department may submit for final State Board approval.

The Master Plan Connection:

This item supports the State Board's *Master Plan* by providing a comprehensive system of instructional leader preparation and advances the implementation of evaluation process of the instructional leadership preparation programs.

First to the Top Connection:

Instructional leaders and teachers are at the heart of boosting student achievement. Tennessee has worked to improve the standards and processes to provide high instructional leadership preparation and professional development to attract more talented individuals to teach.

The Recommendation:

The Department of Education recommends acceptance of the revision on first reading. The SBE staff concurs with this recommendation.

Proposed Policy Revision

I. e. Program Approval

Organizations Eligible to Offer Instructional Leadership License Preparation Programs

Organizations seeking approval to offer Instructional Leadership License preparation programs and to recommend candidates for licensure must meet the respective eligibility criteria. The following organizations are eligible:

1. Tennessee IHEs approved by the State Board of Education (SBE) for teacher education and
2. Education-related organizations in partnership with Tennessee LEAs must meet the Organization Preconditions and Documentation (Appendix E) and the Professional Education Unit Standards (Appendix F).
3. Tennessee LEAs in Partnerships with Out of State Institutions of Higher Education

State approval for the issuance of the Instructional Leadership License (ILL) will be considered for partnerships established between Tennessee LEAs and out of state IHEs based on the following:

- The out of state IHE must have current state program approval for administrator licensure preparation by a state other than Tennessee; and
- The Tennessee LEA must submit to the State Department of Education a completed *Tennessee Learning Centered Leadership System Preparation Program Proposal Template* that responds to the required ILL program components.

The program approval process used for approval of partnerships between Tennessee LEAs and out of state IHEs is the program approval process described in this section of the *Tennessee Learning Centered Leadership Policy*.

Approval Process

Instructional Leadership Licensure (ILL) preparation programs in Tennessee are approved by the State Board of Education (SBE). The process of reviewing preparation programs for approval is managed by the State Department of Education (DOE). At the completion of the review process, the DOE submits recommendations to SBE for approval action. The program approval process includes four basic steps; 1) conditional approval, 2) onsite evaluation visit, 3) DOE recommendations, and 4) SBE approval action.

Step 1: Conditional Approval

The DOE grants conditional approval when the review of an ILL preparation program proposal is considered successful. A potential program provider submits, to the DOE,

a program proposal. The proposal must provide substantial information and supporting documentation about the implementation of the required components of the *Learning Centered Leadership Policy*, including the partnership agreement, candidate selection, an alignment of the ILL preparation curriculum with the TILS, and the preparation program practicum requirements. The conditional approval status allows the program provider to recommend program completers for the ILL pending the outcome of an onsite evaluation visit.

If the review of the ILL preparation program proposal is unsuccessful and conditional approval is denied, the DOE provides to the potential program provider a list of the critical deficiencies. The potential program provider may submit a revised program proposal for reconsideration. Reconsideration of conditional approval occurs only after each of the cited critical deficiencies is addressed and supporting documentation is provided.

Step 2: Onsite Evaluation Visit

At least six (6) months but no later than eighteen (18) months after completion of the ILL preparation program by the first cohort of candidates, a conditionally approved program hosts an onsite evaluation visit. The onsite visit is conducted by an Onsite Evaluation Team (OET) that is comprised of at least three members. The OET members are selected from a cadre of individuals who have been trained in conducting onsite evaluation visits. The OET may include current practicing exemplary instructional leaders, experts in instructional leadership preparation programs and other appropriate personnel. During the onsite evaluation visit, the DOE provides relevant orientation information and staff support to the evaluation team.

The OET focuses on the program provider's evidence that indicates the degree to which the required components of the *Learning Centered Leadership Policy* are successfully implemented. Evidence of candidates' successful progression through and completion of the preparation program as well as evidence of program completers' performance as instructional leaders is also considered by the OET.

Step 3: DOE Recommendations

In developing its approval recommendations for SBE action, the DOE process relies, primarily, on the OET Report and the program providers response to the OET Report. In finalizing the recommendations for SBE action, the DOE may consider evidence and documentation available to OET during the visit. The DOE may include program improvement suggestions. The recommendation options for SBE action include: 1) approval, 2) approval with stipulations, or 3) denial of approval.

Step 4: SBE Action

SBE action on DOE recommendations may occur twice each year. For OET visits that occur during the fall semester, SBE action occurs during the following spring or summer. For OET visits that occur during the spring semester, SBE action occurs during the following fall or winter. SBE action is based on the following options:

- Approval. Full approval is unequivocal, but may be accompanied by statements of weakness. Annual progress toward correcting weaknesses must be reported

to the DOE. The progress will be reviewed yearly and DOE staff will assist the program provider in developing a plan to correct weaknesses.

- **Approval with Stipulations.** Stipulations are specified critical deficiencies that must be addressed by the program provider prior to the granting of full approval. DOE staff will work with the program provider in establishing timelines for correcting the deficiencies. Full approval will be granted if the critical deficiencies are corrected within the stipulated timelines. If sufficient annual progress is made, approval with stipulations may be extended up to three years. At the end of a three-year period of extension or earlier, an onsite visit will occur. As a result of the onsite visit, the DOE will recommend to the SBE either full approval or denial of approval.
- **Denial of Approval.** If the SBE approves a recommendation of denial of approval, the program provider will have one year to correct deficiencies. Candidates enrolled in and completing the non-approved program during the twelve months covered by the notice of denial of approval will receive licensure upon the program provider's recommendation. DOE staff will conduct an onsite visit before the end of the twelve months. As a result of the onsite visit, the DOE will recommend to the SBE either full approval or denial of approval.

Other Preparation Programs

Effective July 1, 2011, no credential shall be issued that allows a person to be employed in a Tennessee public school as an administrator if that person was trained in another state or received training from any type of program not expressly approved by the State Board of Education of Tennessee. Those holding or earning administrator credentials from another state issued after July 1, 2011 may be granted a Tennessee administrator credential if the person seeking the credential has demonstrated at least three years of successful school leadership within the last ten years or are recommended directly from a Tennessee IHE with an approved leadership program.

Other states may make application to the State Board of Education for recognition of their credential in Tennessee. States making application must show significant alignment to the State Board of Education's "Learning-Centered Leadership Policy." Candidates enrolled in an out-of-state program to prepare for administrator licensure in Tennessee prior to January 1, 2011 have until July 1, 2012 to complete the program and apply for a Tennessee "ILL" License.